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PAUL'S UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTISM:
ITS THEORY AND APPLICATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Young Chang Ha
June 1973

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This dissertation, written by

YOUNG CHANG HA

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
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Faculty Committee

Hans Peter Bolt
 K. Hermann Eduard

June 1973
Date

K. Thomas Twine
Dean

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written on Paul and his theology. It is rightly so because in order to come to any full or adequate understanding of the message of Christianity, one has to know not only the meaning of the content of the gospels but also what Paul has to say. He is indeed the giant of all the Christian saints throughout history, and one of the best sources for understanding Christianity proper.

The central theme of Christian message is that God loved the world so much that He gave his unique Son that whoever comes to him in faith will be saved (John 3:16). Although it was not Paul who made the aforementioned statement, his central message has basically equal significance. For it was God who "sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal 4:4-5)

For Paul man without Christ has no chance of being free from bondage of sin and death. He is doomed to die in sin. Even Mosaic laws are not able to guarantee man's complete freedom from the powers of sin and death. But something drastic happened to remedy the situation. God acted on behalf of man. This act is an act of grace, according to R. Bultmann. For God showed his love through his Son who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" and "humbled

himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross." (Phil. 2:7-8) That was His plan, His pleasure, and His gift to man. What Paul was really focusing on here in order to describe this love of God was the event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. That event was Christ-event, and Christ-event was salvation-event. In and through this event God's love for man was unmistakably demonstrated once and for all. His resurrection from the dead clearly showed God's victory over the power of death. This event was so conclusive of God's love for man that Paul picks up this theme in the first ten verses of Romans 6, with which we will deal later. In fact Paul's whole message and mission was hinged upon this central event. Therefore, he was able to say to the congregation in Corinth: "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2) Also the Christian message by its nature and implication had the whole world as its scope of operation. Thus Paul devoted his life for this cause until his death.

What I propose to study in this paper then is to see and correlate the relationship between the central Christian message (the love of God in Christ for all men) and the rite of baptism according to Paul. My thesis is: According to Paul, Christian baptism *is* the proclamation of the Christian message. For if one truly and honestly understands the meaning of baptism attested by Paul, he can

certainly appreciate well what the central meaning of the gospel is and strives harder to live accordingly. To me, as I have studied to prepare this paper, to have a proper understanding of baptism by Paul will certainly aid to get to the heart of not only Paul's own theology but also to the heart of the Christian kerygma.

My approach to this thesis is fourfold: First, baptism understood and practiced in Paul's day. How was baptism understood in Paul's time? Was there any influence from Judaism or Hellenistic mystery religions? If there was such influence, how much was there? Second, what was Paul's own understanding of baptism? In order to deal with this aspect several key passages in the New Testament, mostly from Paul's letters will be examined, namely Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and I Thessalonians; and, some of the deutro Pauline letters, such as Colossians and Ephesians. There we will exegete every passage with care and scrutiny. The basic motif here will be that baptism, for Paul, is the salvation-event.

My third area of concentration would be the relationship between baptism and faith. If a person is baptized after hearing the word of God, what kind of and how much faith played a role in the individual's achieving his salvation? Is faith a necessary ingredient for baptism, or can one be saved by baptism alone without faith? An interesting argument between Karl Barth, who opposes infant baptism on

the ground that the child cannot understand what faith means and Oscar Cullmann who supports the idea of infant baptism, will be discussed. Several passages in Romans will be dealt with to pursue the question. Of course, I will add my own interpretation on the subject before the chapter is over.

My last and final area of study would have to be the relation between baptism and Christian ethics. My thesis here is that once a man is baptized into Christ, he must become a new man. Of course, this does not mean that everyone who goes through baptism should turn out to be a new person in a magical way. It means that the baptismal experience should result in a radical change. For "if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; behold the old is gone." (Gal. 2:20) The idea of transformation from the old to the new is in essence the key message of Christian baptism; thus an altogether new life begins. An excellent treatment of the theory of the two dominions by Robert Tannehill along with Victor Furnish's extensive study on Christian ethics in Paul will also be discussed.

In the final analysis, however, Paul's theology, namely, his soteriology and christology cannot be understood without being related to his eschatology. As V. P. Furnish points out those three areas are inseparable in forming the theology of St. Paul. Thus at the end of the chapter I shall attempt to discuss Paul's eschatology in relation to Christian baptism.

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CHAPTER I

UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICE OF BAPTISM IN PAUL'S DAY

It is often said that nothing is created from a vacuum. It is certainly true in the case of Christian baptism, for it was a product of the Greco-Roman civilization as well as the highly developed Jewish religion. No one seems to know exactly how much Jewish or Hellenistic influence came into play in forming the unique Christian baptism. Many biblical scholars have attempted to understand the complex results of these cultural, social and religious inter-reactions, but the task is immense and difficult.

My first attempt here is to see how much influence the Jewish religion had on the forming of Christian baptism. The substance of Christian baptism will be dealt with in the second chapter, but it is here that Jewish influence will be discussed.

JEWISH INFLUENCE

First of all, Christianity was thought of as one of the many sects of the Jewish religion that existed at the time of Jesus' ministry. A Jew named John, labeled as the Baptist, preached the baptism of repentance to all

Israelites. His message was that the kingdom of God was imminent and that in order to gain access to it one must become worthy of the kingdom. This was rather surprising and even shocking to the Jews, especially the religious leaders, for it was widely held that the messianic age was at hand, and an age that would be inaugurated with a mark of the collective revenge of Israel upon the Gentiles. What the Baptist preached in essence was that the Jews were no less subject to God's punishment than the pagans, unless they repented.

John bluntly proclaimed this to the Jews: "You viper's blood! Who warned you to escape from the coming retribution? . . . Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham for our father!' I tell you that God can make children for Abraham out of these stones here." (Matt. 3: 7-9 NEB)

Of course, the Jews had all sorts of cleansing laws and regulations prescribed by Moses. (Lev. 11-15) Washing as a cleansing purpose both physically and symbolically was not altogether new to the Jews. What was new was that John preached that Jews were no better off than Gentiles in the eyes of God.¹ John was eventually beheaded by Herod, but what was significant from the ministry of John was the

¹This notion is quite similar to Paul's when the latter addresses the Jewish Christians in Rome (Romans 3: 23).

emerging of a new concept of baptism. The traditional concept of cleansing stains off from one's body had now a new interpretation: baptism, understood as both an ethical and an eschatological event, a meaning that was not present in the proselyte or synagogal ablutions.²

In this sense it was a revolutionary interpretation which also influenced Paul's understanding and interpretation of Christian baptism in later years.

Proselyte baptism was mentioned a moment ago, and it is appropriate to discuss it at this time. When Gentiles became or wanted to become Jews, they had to go through a ritual which signified the transition from "lost" to "saved" or from the "out" to the "in" group. This initiation rite was adopted out of necessity, because of the peculiar understanding of the Jewish people in general as themselves being the Chosen People of God. Non-Jews were looked upon as unclean, as were their lands, their homes, their associates; and to touch these Gentiles defiled the Jew. Out of this kind of understanding, it became an axiom of Jewish thought that a Gentile would need to be purified before he could enter the commonwealth of Israel.³ The rite of purification

²M. Simon, *Jewish Sects at the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), p. 91.

³W. F. Flemington, *New Testament Doctrine of Baptism* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), p. 16.

became Jewish Proselyte baptism.

Now the intent of the ritual was not for superficial display, but it was "an act of self-dedication to the God of Israel, involving spiritual factors as well as physical with a fundamentally sacramental character."⁴

Now as to the date of the origin of this purification rite, it is impossible to fix any date according to J. Delorme.⁵ But, I am inclined to agree with him that there is a definite link between the Proselyte baptism and the baths of ritual purification laid down by the law.

In regard to how much the Jewish rite of purification influenced Christian baptism, R. Bultmann seems to take the position that Jewish religion (Proselyte baptism) had little influence on Christian baptism.

The analogy which exists between early Christian baptism and the Jewish baptism of proselytes does not signify that the former originated out of the latter; for if that were the case one would expect it to have been performed on the Gentiles only. Certain testimony to the practice of Proselyte baptism is not found before the end of the first century A.D. It may have been older but that cannot be proved.⁶

However, Delorme counters that argument. He insists

⁴W. F. Flemington, "Baptism," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 348-353.

⁵J. Delorme, "Practice of Baptism in Judaism at the Beginning of the Christian Era" in *Baptism in the New Testament* (Dublin: Helicon, 1964), p. 25f.

⁶R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 40.

that there may have been a desire among Jews to accomodate the pagans who were repelled by circumcision or who were even rendered liable to be pursued by the police once circumcision had been forbidden.⁷ Especially in the case of women who wanted to be proselytes, the bath may have supplanted circumcision in importance in the minds of many rabbis. For these reasons Delorme says, "it is very probable that the baptism of proselytes is earlier than John the Baptist."⁸ This position is also shared by T. W. Manson, who feels that beyond reasonable doubt "the practice of baptizing proselytes had been adopted before John's mission began, and he adapted the rite to his own purpose."⁹

My personal view on this subject is that Proselyte baptism played an important role as the bridge between the Jewish right of purification and Christian baptism. I base this opinion on the following observations. First, all the laws that dealt with "pure" and "impure" in Israel were a motif for Proselyte baptism. The Gentiles were thought of as unclean. It was therefore necessary to cleanse them in some way. Secondly, there is a definite link between the baptism of John and Christian baptism. Jesus was baptized by John. Thirdly, it seems that baptism was already a

⁷Cf. Simon, pp. 131-132. ⁸Delorme, p. 31.

⁹T. W. Manson, "Baptism in the Church," *Scottish Journal of Theology* (December 1949), page unknown.

familiar rite at the time of Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost. The fact that three thousand were baptized, without question, supports this interpretation. (Acts 2:38) Obviously there was no need for explanation of baptism to those early Christians.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that the commandments of the law were read during the administration of the rite indicates the probable relationship between the two groups of baptism.

Finally, the Christian baptism is not a mere combination of different brands of purification rites, but has its unique characteristics as a radically transforming and eschatological event, with which I shall deal later in this paper.

THE HELLENISTIC INFLUENCE

More convincing than the Jewish influence on Christian baptism is the influence by the Hellenistic culture--especially the mystery religions. Such expression as "buried with Christ" (Rom. 6:4) and the baptized's emergence from the water resembles so much the practices prevalent in the Greek world at the time of Paul.

Probably one of the best treatments of the subject on the relationship between the Christian baptism and the Hellenistic mystery religions was presented by G. Wagner in his book, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries*. Wagner

introduces such scholars as Gunkel, Wendland, and others, who insist that Paul's doctrine of baptism was entirely and absolutely dependent on the mysteries. Gunkel, for instance quoting the passage in Romans 6:3-6, raises the question, if the Jews would have understood such ideas as: (1) mystical union with Christ; (2) baptism interpreted as being drowned; (3) the conviction that everlasting life is to be gained by such a sacrament; and (4) the belief that what happened to the heavenly person again happens to the believer in the sacrament; then a relationship could exist. Gunkel's position is that no such ideas would be accepted by the Jews, therefore, eliminating the possibility of influence by the Jewish religion on the idea of Christian baptism. However, he connects the previous notions directly to the Egyptian mysteries of Osiris.¹⁰ He adduces as a proof for his position, by finding the same kind of belief in the mysteries of Osiris. Such statements as: "that a man may attain everlasting life if he enjoys union with the god who himself died and rose again" is clear proof of assimilation of such beliefs.¹¹

Wendland's position is slightly different from Gunkel's, but more on a surer foundation for Paul's

¹⁰G. Wagner, *Pauline Baptism and the Pagan Mysteries* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1967), pp. 8-9.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 48.

dependence on the mysteries. As a possible reason for such dependence, Wendland thinks that Paul probably had contact with Mithraism in Tarsus.¹² What Wendland also adds to this belief is that there is an affinity between Pauline baptism and the initiation rites of the mysteries; namely, in the cults of Mithras and Isis, cleansing baths are considered to have moral efficacy; in the ceremonies of the Cybele cult and in the taurobolium of the cult of Bellona, the adept undergoes a rebirth; and the worshipper of Attis, Osiris, and Adonis dies with the deity with whom he rises again to new life.

All this brings Wendland to the conclusion that in Paul, Jewish theology and Christian spirituality are combined with the mysticism of the salvation religions, in such a way that this determines the positions of his central Christ-mysticism around which those thoughts and themes are grouped.¹³

What we found in Gunkel and Wendland we also find in Bultmann. He sees Paul as finding baptism already conceived before his time as a sacrament of the mystery religions and then striving to give it a new interpretation.¹⁴ Thus Paul owes his understanding of Christian baptism to the mystery religions of the Hellenistic world.

In addition to this interpretation Bultmann offers

¹²P. Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur in ihren Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1912), p. 155.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 10. ¹⁴Bultmann, p. 311.

two other instances which suggest the influence of mystery religions on Christian baptism. One is the interpretation of baptism as a "re-birth." Rebirth is of course different from "re-creation," for the latter happens when the believer is recreated anew in baptism into Christ.

Another evidence of the wide circulation of the mystery idea found in the Gospel of John 19:34b, 25: "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out *blood* and *water*." This is known as an interpretation in the book. In any event the meaning of the passage is clear: In Jesus' death lies the foundation of the sacrament of the Lord's supper and baptism.¹⁵

Of course there are other scholars who take the opposite position: namely, denying any Hellenistic influence on Christian baptism interpreted by Paul. Wagner himself takes this view and presents several of the proponents of this view: M. Goguel, O. Michel, H. A. Kennedy, and G. Kittel, just to mention a few.¹⁶ Their stress is that Paul has to be interpreted from the standpoint of his own theology and not from that of formal non-Christian parallels.¹⁷ Michel's view is that baptism is connected with quite definite "historical events" whose consequences take place in

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 142. ¹⁶Wagner, pp. 26-27.

¹⁷M. Goguel, *La Naissance du Christianisme* (Paris: Payot, 1955), p. 275.

the old man and the new. Although this thought can be called mythical, it has nothing at all to do with mysticism or metaphysics.¹⁸ But Paul's theology is founded upon the historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and this marks it off from all other religions.¹⁹ And the death of Jesus is understood by Paul as a death for sin--an idea to which the mysteries offer no parallel.²⁰

All these seem to emphasize the fact that the Christian baptism has developed its own course in terms of formation of the ritual, and does not rely at all on the religions of the day in Paul's time. Although this view is shared by such leading biblical scholars as mentioned above, it is not that convincing to me. I cannot conceive of the lack of influence by the religions of the Hellenistic world on the Christian baptism, as too many other evidences compiled by the aforementioned scholars have testified.

¹⁸O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1957), p. 131.

¹⁹G. Kittel, *Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1932), p. 126.

²⁰H. A. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), p. 227f.

CHAPTER II

PAUL'S OWN UNDERSTANDING OF BAPTISM AS SALVATION EVENT

"IN THE NAME OF THE LORD"

(I Corinthians 1:13)

In this passage Paul asks the Corinthian congregation whether they were baptized in the name of Paul. The implied answer to this question is of course negative.

This particular phrase, "In the name of . . . ,", however, presented a considerable controversy among New Testament scholars in recent years. Several interpretations of this phrase have been offered. R. Bultmann, for example, admits the difficulty this phrase presents and says the following:¹

It is fairly generally recognized that in some places the formular is to be regarded as a literal rendering of the Semitic $\alpha\psi\iota\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$ means "with respect or regard to," "because. . . ." Thus Matt. 10:41f is to be expounded: "He that receives a prophet in the name of, namely, with respect to the fact that he is a prophet" ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\ \pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon$). Also, Matt. 18:20. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, namely, in relation to me" ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\mu\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$).

Bultmann goes on to say that the expression $\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \acute{\omicron}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$

¹R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 274.

in the baptismal formula must be explained along the line of the Hebrew *בשם*. In the final sense, thus, *בשם* = *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*.

One other important observation Bultmann makes in regard to this passage is that Paul does not use *βαπτίζειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Ἰησοῦ*, but on the basis of I Cor. 1:13, we might conclude that he was familiar with that expression.²

Elsewhere Paul simply refers to baptism *εἰς χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν* (Romans 6:3) or simply *εἰς χριστόν* (Galations 3:27). In all practical sense these are rendered in the same meaning as "in the name of." Thus "materially *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* is equivalent to the simple *εἰς*."³

A second interpretation comes from W. Heitmüller⁴ when he interprets *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα* as having legal character. Thus the baptized becomes the property of the one into whose name he was baptized. This idea has the Hellenistic influence where all sorts of gods were represented by their respective names. In this sense the name is like a brand or trademark which indicated ownership or owner's rights. All of this interpretation is quite

²*Ibid.*, p. 275.

³*Ibid.*

⁴W. Heitmüller, *Im Namen Jesu* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1903), p. 75.

agreeable with Bultmann's understanding of the phrase when he says that "the meaning of the naming of the name is that the candidate for baptism is stamped as the property of the Lord, and is placed under his protection."⁵

So far the interpretation by Heitmüller is most dominant and well received by most scholars. It is in this sense that anyone who is baptized into Christ automatically becomes the property of Jesus.

But the question may arise as to precisely when this ownership by the Lord occurs. It occurs, according to Paul, when the baptized proclaims the sentence, "Jesus is Lord." This is not only a verbal acclamation on the part of the baptized, but is at once a declaration that he pledges his complete allegiance to the Lord, thus submitting himself to the authority and control of Christ. The idea of complete submission of oneself to Christ is indeed an important concept for Paul, because it was the misunderstanding of this aspect of Paul's teaching among the Corinthians. They thought somehow allying with the baptizer was important if not equal to allying with Christ. It became the source of division among the members of the Corinthian church. (I Cor. 1:12-13) Thus the idea of oneness in Christ Jesus was strongly implied here in the phrase of baptism "into the

⁵R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 137.

name of Jesus Christ."⁶

C. K. Barrett points out that baptism in the early church seems regularly to have been "into" or "in the name of Christ" (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48) or "into Christ" (Rom. 6:3). The Trinitarian formula in Matthew 28:19, however, seems to have been a later development. There is little doubt that Matthew added this highly developed theological interpretation into his book. What Barrett says well, and agrees with Heitmüller on this subject of "baptism into name of," is that the phrase indicates that "it is under the authority of Christ that the baptism takes place, and also that the person baptized becomes the property of Christ."⁷

The significance of understanding of this phrase is quite evident from the observations we have made so far; namely, the baptized has a definite goal to go into; he is not left unclear as to where he belongs.

All sorts of different but important concepts spring from the understanding of this phrase. Such areas as becoming a new creation from the old; the concept of "body of Christ," etc., which we will deal with later in this paper.

A closely related phrase with *ὄνομα* is *εἰς*

⁶The idea of being one in Christ will be dealt with in the chapter on baptism and ethics.

⁷C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 47.

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ . The word " εἰς " becomes a focus in question. Again several scholars differ in their exact interpretations. Some typical arguments are:

1. εἰς is the same as εἰς τὸ ὄνομα .⁸
2. εἰς τὸν ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ is not the same as εἰς τὸ ὄνομα . According to R. Schnackenburg, the baptized is incorporated into the body of Christ.⁹ Along with this idea is what F. Prat says in his book, *Theology of St. Paul*, that "to be baptized into the death of Christ is to be baptized into the dying Christ--that is, to be incorporated with Christ in the very act by which he saves us, to die mystically with Him who suffered death in the name and for the benefit of all."¹⁰
3. H. D. Betz makes an important observation when he states that "baptism into Christ" does not refer to baptismal ritual but to the interpretation of the

⁸G. Delling, *Die Zueignung des Heils in der Taufe* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), pp. 68-71. Delling argues that on the basis of I Cor. 10:2, the desert fathers are baptized into Moses, namely, in the name of Moses; also the fact that Paul does not use the term either in Romans 6 or I Cor. 10 is a proof for the theory.

⁹R. Schnackenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), p. 21f.

¹⁰F. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Bookshop, 1956), p. 257.

the ritual.¹¹ Betz insists that the baptismal ritual *and* the interpretation of that ritual are entirely two different things. The ritual remains the same, however: the interpretation of that ritual will vary according to time and other related influences. Furthermore, the phrase "into Christ" is an abbreviated form of the saving-event. Thus "into Christ" is related to the interpretation of baptism and not to the ritual of it. Also for Paul "into Christ" always means the "resurrected Christ," and seldom the historical Jesus, although at some points he refers to that. Theologically speaking, then, the resurrected Christ means the present Christ, who is none other than the crucified Christ. (I Cor. 1:22-23; 2:2)¹²

CONCEPT OF "BODY OF CHRIST"

(I Corinthians 12:12-13)

It has already been pointed out that all those who were baptized into Christ were incorporated into the Body of Christ. But what is the "Body of Christ?"

The term *σῶμα* (body) has an interesting historical

¹¹H. D. Betz, *Nachfolge und Nachahmung Jesu Christi im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 174f.

¹²*Ibid.*

development. In the Old Testament times, the word had no other meaning than being a creature, or created body by God. For the Hebrews never distinguished between matter and form as the Greeks did in later years (Paul's time). Thus, man does not regard himself as a being which out of his own matter shapes himself as the most perfect possible individual. Man is man and never becomes a god. Old Testament man is flesh, namely, a creature. This cannot be altered by anything he does. His work is important only as obedience; i.e., in its orientation to God, and not to self-perfection. For this reason, his relation to God and the fellow creatures with which he shares his being as flesh is far more important than his relation to himself.¹³

The Greek-speaking Jew had to distinguish between **σάρξ** and **σῶμα**. The Greeks viewed body as distinct from the flesh.

Body in itself is good. The **σῶμα** is the divinely given creatureliness which subjects man to God. It is also the place where man meets God and his fellow-men. It is in the **σῶμα**, not in a spiritual or intellectual ego, that he truly lives, believes, and serves. . . . For Paul man can never be understood as a self-contained individual who can be considered in himself. He is always related to God and his fellowmen, authentic only in this relation to them.¹⁴

With this understanding of the term we will proceed

¹³E. Schweizer, "**σῶμα**" *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), VII, pp. 1060f.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 1081.

to analyze I Cor. 12:12.

Paul uses this phrase (to speak of Christ, of course) when he writes to the Corinthians. Namely in verse 12, Paul says, "Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." Here it is clear that Christ is represented or pictured as the body and all the baptized persons are integral parts of the whole body. It is an attempt on the part of Paul to draw on the analogy of the human body with Christ--thus to describe the oneness in Christ as believers in Him. In this case the body of Christ is the Church. And according to Paul in the Corinthian Church, there had been many divisions among the believers--claiming that one belongs to Apollos, Cephas, or Paul or Christ (I Cor. 1:12). By implication, verse 12 states all members in Christ are an entity inseparable in the body's composition. Thus verse 13 is quite clear in its logic. "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into *one* body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

It is interesting that Johannes Weiss points out that there are four parallel passages here in this verse.¹⁵

A *Καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες*

¹⁵J. Weiss, *Earliest Christianity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), I, p. 95.

εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν,
 B εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες,
 B εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι,
 A καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεῦμα ἐποτίσθημεν.

It is poetic in structure. The last words in each A section rhyme: ἐβαπτίσθημεν and ἐποτίσθημεν.

The main intent of Paul's presentation of the body of Christ in I Corinthians 12 is to describe the Church under the analogy of a physical body. Just as one body has many members, so the Church is one, composed of many people. Each member of a physical body has a function to perform which is essential to the life of the body. So has each individual within the church a divinely appointed task to perform which is necessary to the life and work of the Christian community. Some of these individuals have been appointed to functions which are directly related to the mission of the Church--the apostles, prophets, and teachers and, a Romans 12:8 would add, exhorters.

But what Paul also wants to communicate to the Christians in Corinth through this passage is that all those who are baptized into Christ are indeed one. There is no need to maintain any former distinction whatsoever among the members of this body. They are in essence classless, completely devoid of racial distinction or even sex as Gal. 3:28 points out. Probably Schnackenburg has said well in the following statement what I intend to state:

"All former natural distinctions become unimportant, since the baptized attain a new existence in Christ and are brought to a higher unity."¹⁶

We need to keep in mind that the reason Paul emphasizes oneness is that there was severe schism within the Christian Church in Corinth, and it was his attempt to restore the unity of the church through this illustration, namely the concept of one body and one spirit in Christ. The word *ἐν* argues against gnosticism which glorified in individualism. Thus Paul purposely goes back to baptism "because in it the principle of unity is recognizable in the Spirit who is bestowed jointly on all."¹⁷ C. K. Barrett meantime interprets the word *εἰς* as "so as to become." This is a smooth interpretation thus describing the result of the process.¹⁸

One other important concept that we should bring out from this passage is the fact that the "Body of Christ" does not come into existence through baptism, but it exists beforehand and the baptized are received into it.¹⁹

It is like grafting a piece of branch to a big main tree--the grafted branch dissolves into the one big tree. This is the meaning of being incorporated into the body of

¹⁶Schnackenburg, p. 26. ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁸Barrett, p. 288.

¹⁹Schnackenburg, p. 26.

Christ when one is baptized into Christ. Thus to belong to the Christian Church is to be "in Christ" or "In the Lord" (Rom. 16:7; I Cor. 1:30), and the Christian congregations may also be called congregations "in Christ" (Gal. 1:22; I Thes. 2:14). In this sense the phrase "in Christ" in conjunction with the phrase "Body of Christ" represents an *ecclesiological* formula, instead of being a formula for mystic union.²⁰ But this idea of the *ecclesia*, Bultmann states:

is not a club in which like-minded individuals have banded together, though seen from without it may seem so; it is not a conglomeration of the Spirit-endowed, each of whom has and enjoys his private relationship to Christ. It is just this misconception, which has emerged in Corinth, that Paul combats in I Cor. 12:12-30. In doing so, he secondarily designated the church as an organism (SOMA), using this metaphor from the classic Greek tradition. . . . Primarily, however, he is describing the Church as the 'body of Christ.'²¹

Bultmann's main emphasis in this passage is that Paul views all the members as equal because they belong to Christ, and therefore their differences are unimportant.

Two other important ideas have to be dealt with before this section ends. One is the role of the Spirit; the other is the phrase "putting on Christ" in Gal. 3:27.

First, the word "Spirit" appears as a personal agent (cf. v. 11 *καθὼς βούλεται*). Schnackenburg

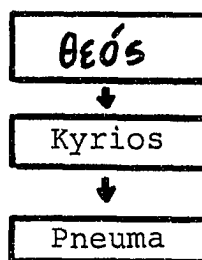
²⁰Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, 311.

²¹*Ibid.*, I, 310.

seems to agree with I. Hermann in his understanding of the role of *πνεῦμα* as "the divine power that goes out from the Lord." According to Hermann²²

The working of the Lord. . . includes the working of the Spirit; the working of *θεός*, however, takes up into itself the working of the Kyrios and thereby at the same time also the working ascribed to the Spirit. To put it otherwise: the operation of the *Pneuma* is a part of the operation of the *Kyrios* as this belongs to the inclusive working of *θεός*.

The whole operation may look somewhat like the diagram:



The important concept here is that *Pneuma* is part of *Kyrios* and not vice versa. Also a notion that the activity of this *Pneuma* is the body of Christ, namely the Church, should not be overlooked.

Secondly, in Gal. 3:27, we find that anyone who is baptized into Christ has "put on Christ." The meaning of this expression is of course metaphoric. Thus R. Schnackenburg dismisses the notion that "putting on Christ" may mean the baptismal water is like a garment in which the baptized are plunged. Rather it describes the *effect*

²²I. Hermann, *Kyrios und Pneuma* (München: Kösel, 1961), p. 75.

symbolically represented in the baptism. Therefore, "through baptism to Christ the believer attains so close a union with Christ that he is wholly 'clothed' with Christ and represents a new man."²³ Consequently, the idea that the baptized outwardly becomes like Christ, or the neophyte through initiation of this rite becomes a kind of second Osiris is a misinterpretation of "putting on Christ."²⁴

We might conclude by saying that "body of Christ" is a metaphor signifying the center of Christian unity; and that all those who are in Christ through baptism are also one regardless of their origin of race, religion, social and cultural differences. "Body of Christ" also represents the Church, Christ as the Head of this body. This also implies the demand and necessity of its members to obey and put their complete allegiance to their Head as obedient and faithful disciples. This then is the distinct feature of the meaning of "Body of Christ."

IDEA OF TWO DOMINIONS

(Romans 6:3-6)

The recurring idea in Romans 6 is that of the

²³Schnackenburg, p. 25.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 24. At this point he strongly resists any meaningful influence by the Hellenistic mystery religions upon the primitive Christianity. Also see the section on Hellenistic influence on the Christian baptism in Chapter I.

baptized dying with Christ. For Paul, dying with Christ means a change of lordship. It means dying to an old master and living to a new one.

Throughout Romans chapter 6, in fact from chapter 5 through 8, the idea of dying and rising with Christ is the continuing central motif in Paul's theology. For the life of a Christian is compared with having a new lord over against his old lord who dominated his life. Receiving Christ necessarily becomes a new experience for Christians, and thus a person becomes a new creation.

In verse 6, for example, Paul speaks of serving sin as a slave. Man becomes a slave to sin. Sin becomes the master of his life and controls him. Man is absolutely at the mercy of sin. In verse 9, it is stated that death no longer has dominion over Christ (*ΚΥΡΙΕΥΕΙ*). In verse 12, the image is varied to the extent that sin is thought of as ruling as king (*ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΕΤΩ*).

Throughout the chapter, the two lords, who rule man, are contrasted. Man can either be a slave to Christ or to sin. On the positive side the rulers are grace (vs. 14-15), obedience (v. 16), righteousness (vs. 18-20), and God (vs. 10-13 and 22-23). But it is God to whom one is enslaved when enslaved to grace, obedience, and righteousness.

On the negative side, sin is quite consistent as the ruler or lord. In verses 16-20, for instance, sin is

opposed to obedience and righteousness.

In defining sin, Robert Tannehill states rather succinctly: "Sin is not merely a series of separate acts nor an abstract principle, but a demonic power, a world ruler who claims the obedience of men just as God does."²⁵ The fact that sin rules man as his master is evident in the following passages in Romans. Sin reigns or exercises lordship (5:21; 6:12, 14), sin dwells and is active within man (7:17, 20). It has its own law (7:23-8:2).

The central idea of ruling by the two dominions is that man becomes a slave either to God or to sin. He automatically stands under the influence or domain of the two powers. He cannot stand in the middle ground.

What is important in Paul's understanding of this idea of two dominions is that the old ruler or dominion has been destroyed by God and a new lord has emerged. Man has suddenly discovered a new Master. His allegiance to this new master brings a totally new life style, as stated in Romans 6:3-6.

It is precisely because of the dual dominions that Paul's anthropology is necessarily a doctrine of soteriology at the same time. For Paul's main concern in his entire work is to tell people and let them understand what

²⁵R. C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1966), p. 16

it means to be free in Christ and live accordingly in freedom from sin and death. Tannehill makes an interesting observation when he introduces K. G. Kuhn who points out that there is a connection between Romans chapter 6 and the section of the "Manual of Discipline" of the Qumran Community which has been entitled, "The Two Spirits in Man."²⁶

According to Kuhn we find in this manual a dualism of two spirits who exercise dominion over their respective "sons." One spirit represents the evil power who makes people sinful, thus leading them to eternal perdition. The other spirit represents the good spirit, who leads men into eternal happiness.

The idea is that in the drama of human existence, there is a constant battle between the two giant powers, namely, the demonic power of sin and the goodness and righteousness of God, and man is caught in between. Man can, however, be free from the domain of the evil power because of God's act of grace, which was sending His Son to die on the cross. This act is a once-and-for-all happening, and man finds himself in a totally new situation, if he is willing to place himself in it. With the understanding of Christ's coming in mind, we shall proceed to study some of the important words in the verses 3 through 9 of Romans chapter 6.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 17.

In verse 3, *ἡ ἀγνοεῖτε* assumes the readers are already familiar with the content of the statement which follows *ὅτι*, namely, that all those baptized into Christ were baptized into His death. But what does it mean to be baptized into Christ (*εἰς Χριστόν*)?

As stated earlier it means *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*. R. Schnackenburg takes the position that the "baptism of Moses" in I Corinthians 10:2 is manifestly a sign of adherence to Moses in order to belong to him as the leader chosen of God. "This passage," he continues, "suggests that the formula *βαπτίζειν εἰς* should be closely linked with *βαπτίζειν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*."²⁷ His main argument is that "among the many baptisms that existed at that time, baptism is defined by means of the name of the person to whom it sets a man in a particular relationship of belonging."²⁸

The second interpretation of the phrase *εἰς Χριστόν* is represented by F. Prat, who affirms that through baptism into Christ the baptized is not alone subjected like a slave to his owner, or a hireling to the employer who hires him, rather he is incorporated in him. Prat further explains:

To be baptized into the death of Christ is to be baptized into the dying Christ--that is, to be incorporated with Christ in the very act by which He saves

²⁷Schnackenburg, p. 23. ²⁸*Ibid.*

us, to die mystically with Him who suffered death in the name and for the benefit of all.²⁹

In his book, *Discipleship and Imitation of Christ*, H. D. Betz brings up these four important interpretations on this subject.³⁰

1. **Εἰς τὸν Χριστόν** is different from **εἰς τὸ ὄνομα ~** in that in baptism the baptized is incorporated into the body of Christ.
2. In the baptismal ritual, the baptized repeats the death of Christ in some symbolic magic way.
3. **Εἰς τὸν Χριστόν** does not refer to the baptismal ritual but to the *interpretation* of the ritual.
4. The baptismal ritual does not repeat the death of Christ, but the believer is initiated to the content of belief.

The previous statement is congruous with Tannehill who insists that any interpretation of baptism **εἰς Χριστόν** must be able to explain how Paul can move from this idea to the related idea of baptism **εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ**, and then interpret this as participation in Christ's death.³¹

What Tannehill does well in his interpretation of this phrase is that he connects it with the two different phrases which follow in versus 4 and 5. Namely, it means that "we were buried with" Christ (v. 4) and that "we were united with Him in the likeness of His death" (v. 5). What it means here is that the believer shares in this death, is

²⁹Prat, p. 257.

³⁰Betz, pp. 174f.

³¹Tannehill, p. 22.

included in this death. His conclusion is:

through baptism the believer has come to share in Christ. . . he has entered Christ as the corporate person of the new aeon. Thus we should translate, 'we were baptized *into* Christ Jesus.'³²

What has been indicated so far is the helpful insight that the believer dies with Christ because Christ's crucifixion meant the crucifixion of "our old man" and "the body of sin." As a result of this event, "new man" has been created, for the dominion of sin is destroyed. Thus we can safely state that baptism for Paul is important only because it was founded by the death of Christ on the cross. For without His death our "old man" would still be active and we would be enslaved by him.

IDEA OF NEW CREATION

(Galations 2:20; 3:27; II Corinthians 5:17;
Colossians 3:10)

Probably one of the most important and far reaching concepts in the Christian baptism is the concept of becoming a new man. On a number of different occasions Paul stresses this point in his epistles (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20 and 6:15; II Cor. 5:17). But what does this mean, that a person becomes new? We find in the gospel according to

³²*Ibid.*

St. John that Nicodemus raised the same question to Jesus: "How can a man be born when he is old?" We all know the answer Jesus gave to Nicodemus: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

In order to deal with this question, we need first of all to understand what and how Paul understood the nature of man--namely, his anthropology. Paul's basic reason to determine man's nature is to expound how man can be saved. Thus Paul's anthropology has its root in his soteriology. We cannot separate these two ideas, for they are two sides of the same coin.

Now getting back to Paul's anthropology, Paul sees man always in his relation to God.³³ Man's ultimate concern--a question of life and death--is how a man can truly be human. H. D. Betz deals with this very question in his paper entitled, "Humanization of Man: Delphi, Plato, and Paul." He points out that in the chief European languages the word "human" first means the "merely human," the human in its frailty. Second, the term refers to the attitudes of kindness, forgiveness, and tolerance, etc. Finally, it means the goal that man sets for himself--expressed by such words as "humaneness," "human dignity," "human

³³Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I, 191.

rights," etc.³⁴

Beginning with explanations of how the ancient philosophers (Delphi and Plato) tried to put more humanness into the human through various religious concepts, Betz concentrates on how Paul interpreted that concept through the event of Christ's coming. Indeed it was Paul who was the first Christian theologian to systematically expound what man really was.³⁵

According to Paul, man was originally good and sufficiently human. His humanity was so complete that he was free from "sin and death." Then something happened. Because of his willful disobedience to God, man lost that virginity of being human, and a new element emerged in man--"sin." Sin is not something we imagine as an abstract form; it is a *reality* that has the quality of being super-human and possesses demonic power. According to Paul, man, ever since Adam, has become the slave to this "sin." That was what man became after Adam's fall. But a new beginning has arrived since that fall. The advent of Christ in the form of man was the most decisive, inclusive event in the history of mankind. The whole picture has now changed

³⁴H. D. Betz, "Humanization of Man: Delphi, Plato, and Paul" in *Religion and the Humanizing of Man* (2d ed. Council on the Study of Religion, 1973), pp. 159-74.

³⁵Cf. E. Käsemann, "On Paul's Anthropology" in his *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 10.

because of this great and unique event. Man no longer is in bondage of "sin" and "death." He becomes a free man. A new chapter has opened up for the entire history of mankind--to enjoy this new life.

But this new freedom is not free unless it is appropriated by the man who believes in Christ. Here lies the key issue in becoming a new man or new creation.

Theoretically, and practically "anybody who is in Christ is a new creation" (II Cor. 5:17). But how does this change or transformation take place? We shall focus on this in this section.

First of all, let us see that man has a dual nature,³⁶ according to Paul. Man is both good and bad, so to speak. He has the potential to be good or evil. Bultmann interprets this by using the word *soma*.³⁷ Paul, according to Bultmann, sees man as a living unity. He is a person having a relationship to himself (*soma*). He is a person who lives in his intentionality, his pursuit of some purpose, his willing and knowing (*psyche*, *pneuma*). This state of living toward some goal, having some attitude, willing something and knowing something, belongs to man's very nature and in itself is neither good nor bad. Only the goal a man is striving for determines the outcome--

³⁶See "Two Dominions," above, pp. 23-29.

³⁷Cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 209.

whether choosing good or evil; deciding for or against God.³⁸ What is at stake is the fact that man without Christ remains in the dark--he is surrounded, controlled by the power of evil or sin. There is no way he can escape from this bondage.

Although Paul does not often use the term "conversion" in his letter, what must happen in a man's life to be truly human is to experience this conversion. Such expressions as changing from "old" to "new" (Old humanity vs. new humanity in Romans 5), or "the old has passed, behold the new has come," (II Cor. 5:17) demonstrates the necessity for all believers in Christ to go through this change. This change, however, is so radical that the "inner man" has to be changed. In Romans 7:22 "the inner man" (*ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*) is man's real self in contrast to the self that has come under the sway of sin, namely, "the *soma* of death" (Rom. 7:24) or "the *soma* of sin."

In regard to the question of how man is precisely brought to this new status with Christ-event, Paul answers first by reference to ritual. He is in substantial agreement with all of antiquity that some form of "conversion" is indispensable.³⁹ Therefore, the Christian undergoes the ritual of baptism.

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Betz, "Humanization of Man. . .," p. 170.

It is at this point that I would like to expand the meaning of this ritual of baptism. In Romans 6:5, we read, "If we have been united with him in a death *like* his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection *like* his." In the original Greek text the word **ὁμοίωμα** is used, which is translated as "like or likeness." The important point here is that whether the word **ὁμοίωμα** is related to the ritual or "to his death." R. Tannehill⁴⁰ points out that the word **ὁμοίωμα** is referring to the baptismal rite, and not to Christ's death. In other words, **ὁμοιώματι** is an image represented at the rite of baptism. Thus, in relation to Christ's death, the ritual of baptism is *only* **ὁμοίωμα**, and *not* the same as Christ's death.

To put it simply, a ritual is nothing more than a ritual. However, rituals can have many meanings. More importantly a person who goes through any ritual *must* understand what that ritual means to him; otherwise that ritual may have no significance at all no matter how rich the symbolism may be.

In the case of Christian baptism, there are many meanings attached to this ritual. First of all, the individual who is initiated through baptism is incorporated into the "body of Christ" which is called the Church. This interpretation of baptism was dealt with in the section on

⁴⁰Tannehill, pp. 32-34.

"Body of Christ." Through baptism, thus, a believer becomes an integral part of this all-inclusive body. This is a new community--a new humanity. In Paul's view, "the corruption of the 'old' man was so complete that he is able to describe man's participation in the Christ-event only in terms of 'recreation.'" (Cf. Rom. 6:4; 7:6; 12:2; II Cor. 4:16; 5:17; Gal. 6:15)

This newly acquired freedom also guarantees that death no longer has dominion over man (Rom. 6:9). This theme is expanded throughout chapters six and eight of Romans. Certainly "our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin" (Rom. 6:6).

Secondly, this idea of being a new creation does not mean that the new believer is completely immune from sinning. It is important to understand that it is not sin but the enslavement of sin which has been destroyed. As man's death is the end of his sinfulness, so is power of sin gone forever by the death and resurrection of Christ (or Christ-event). The word **δεδωκεν** (verse 7, to be freed from) has the juridic connotation from the ancient court. No matter how cruel the crime a man may have committed, he will not be responsible for his crime after his death. This was possible when **καταργήθη** (being destroyed) happened to the body of sin. Thus to be completely sinless is not in the realm of human possibility

no matter how hard humanization may strive. (But then the intent of humanization is not to become sinless.) So to become sinless or perfect is only possible in the "eschaton." It is for this reason that Paul invariably arrives at the conclusion: "Don't feel too bad if you are not perfect now, just strive hard to be perfect, for the last day (end) will come soon."⁴¹

We shall deal later in the paper of the relation between baptism and eschatology understood by Paul.

One final comment on this subject is that all those who have become a new creation have a duty to perform; and their guiding principles are based on one word: **ἀγάπη** (I Cor. 13: love). This is indeed the fulfillment of true humanity. What will follow next is the inevitable application of this new life in terms of life style.

⁴¹This idea is clear in Rom. 6, for instance, where the Christ-event is described as the past event (aorist), but the fulfillment of full reality of the Christian life is only possible in the eschaton (future tense).

CHAPTER III

BAPTISM AND FAITH

HOW FAITH IS RELATED TO BAPTISM

What role does faith play in baptism? In almost all the evidence we have in the primitive church we find that faith is an inseparable part of the rite of baptism. It seems as though baptism without faith is even unthinkable. The format seems to be "Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved."

We find on five different occasions where this unity of the two elements is present. The three thousand men converted by Peter, at the first Pentecost, were baptized that same day (Acts 2:41); the Ethiopian eunuch came down from his chariot and was baptized by the deacon Philip who had just instructed him (Acts 8:38). St. Paul's jailer was baptized with all his family the same day he accepted the Lord (Acts 16:33); the twelve disciples at Ephesus, who has received only the baptism of John, "Believed on Jesus and were baptized" (Acts 19:5); and a similar formula epitomizes the labors of the Apostle at Corinth (Acts 18). To use F. Prat's phrase, "there was

absolutely no interval between faith and baptism."¹

In other places in the paper² we have seen that Paul's anthropology is his soteriology. For Paul, to receive salvation is the most important thing in man's life.

To the question as to how man receives this salvation, Paul's answer is: "man is saved by faith." It is extremely important therefore that the apostle's idea of man's response to God's gracious act in Jesus Christ not be misunderstood.

For Paul, "faith" does not mean intellectual assent to certain facts or doctrines. Belief that certain facts or doctrines are reliable is really to put one's trust in his own reason, it is a confidence in one's own mental ability to verify the object of faith. It becomes obvious that such a belief in one's own intellectual achievement is not faith in God, but faith in himself, thus, creating another form of idolatry. To use the words of Paul, it would be a faith which rests on "the wisdom of men" rather than on "the power of God." (I Cor. 2:5) Moreover, it ought to be apparent that intellectual belief should not be confused with the faith which saves. As

¹F. Prat, *Theology of St. Paul* (Westminster, Md.: Neuman Bookshop, 1956), II, 260.

²See section on *Recreation*, pp. 29-36.

G. P. Beasley-Murray says, "In the New Testament faith is no mere intellectual acceptance of a set of religious propositions."³ Rather, faith is personal commitment to God's revelation in a person. The background to this concept is found by Paul in the Old Testament idea of man's trust in Yahweh (Exod. 14:31).⁴ There the object of faith was not some fact or teaching to which man gave his intellectual assent, rather it was the living, mighty God to whom one entrusted his very life. This personal idea of faith came into sharpest focus through Paul's understanding of God's full and final revelation in Christ. "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law. . . , " declares Paul, "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who have faith." (Rom. 3:21-22) Also in Rom. 1:16f, it was declared, "Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes. . . for in it the righteousness of God is revealed *through faith for faith* (ἘΚ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ Εἰς ΠΙΣΤΙΝ). The concluding phrase of this statement emphasizes faith as the sole mode of appropriation of the gospel: namely, the revelation of God's righteousness is "a matter of faith

³G. P. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 267.

⁴W. H. P. Hatch, *The Pauline Idea of Faith* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), pp. 1f.

from start to finish."⁵

Thus the object of faith is not a creed, but a person--a person who lived in the midst of the very history where men were striving for salvation. The saving God had in Christ come into the personal experience of man so that he could entrust his existence to him, for God "justifies him who has faith in Jesus." (Rom. 3:26)

Now according to Bultmann, this kind of faith is a total commitment of oneself to God in a manner of obedience. Namely, faith is seen as an act of obedience.⁶ Paul's portrayal of Abraham's faith illustrates the fundamental motif of the Pauline conception: that faith means "openness to and full participation in the redemptive power of God operative in Christ's death and resurrection."⁷

Such an act of obedience also demonstrates that one risks his entire being. He bets his whole life not knowing the exact outcome of his betting. To me this is faith. The story of Abraham illustrates to us that faith does not rest on secure proof (Abraham left Haran for "the land that I will show you" (Gen. 12:1) even though human

⁵C. H. Dodd, *Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), p. 14.

⁶R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), I, 314f.

⁷V. P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 184.

evidence seemed against it), but stands even against the contrariness of evidence. When one has that kind of faith, he therefore runs the risk of being wrong, and that risk has to do with his very life. This is what it means to be crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20); and this is why the Christian can say, "we know that our old self was crucified with him." (Rom. 6:6) Indeed the man of faith knows that the "old man" with all his passions for proofs and earthly securities has been put to death; he has completely surrendered himself to the hands of the Almighty God. This is what it means to have faith in God.

THE USE OF "ΠΙΣΤΕΥΕΙΝ" IN THE CONTEXT OF BAPTISM

Similar in his idea of confession, which is the verbal expression of this personal commitment. This is found in Romans 10:9. The question to be raised here is: how is the term "faith" used in the context of baptism? Several important points should be brought to our attention. First this confession takes place in the baptismal rite. It was in baptism that the confession "Jesus is Lord" was proclaimed by the baptized. Secondly, there is a distinction between "confession" and "believing," Confession is done by lips, and believing is done by the heart. Also the content of each act is different: confess "that Jesus is Lord" and "believe God raised Him from the dead."

An interesting difference is also brought out in Acts 8:37 where the baptized (the eunuch) replies to Philip: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Here the content of the eunuch's belief is not the same as in Rom. 10:9. O. Cullmann, by the way, calls this statement in Acts "the earliest baptismal ritual," and points out this is a liturgical answer to the question in verse 36, which is also liturgical in character.⁸ Thirdly, the content of this belief in the heart comes from Paul's *Kerygma*, which is the earliest Christian proclamation recorded in I Cor. 15:3-4. Fourthly, baptism "in the name of Christ" happens when the acclamation "Jesus is Lord" is made in the baptismal ritual.

Finally, confession (or acclamation) may be meaningless without sincere belief in the heart that "God raised Jesus from the dead." In other words, the Christian confession or any confession, without understanding of the content of that confession would be absurd. It is important for us to know that Paul does not intend to suggest that baptism is a ritual requirement which man must legalistically go through if he is to come into "saving" relationship with Christ and the Church which is the body of Christ. That would be to revert to the very legalism from

⁸O. Cullmann, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1950), p. 71f.

which his faith had freed him. His idea of baptism, therefore, must be understood in the light of this concept of faith. The fact that in baptism the baptized must have concrete faith presents some peculiar problem in terms of understanding the practice of infant baptism.

ON INFANT BAPTISM

K. Barth, for instance, vehemently opposes infant baptism on the ground that infants do not have the capacity to have faith. In response to the argument that babies are baptized on the confession of the church or of their parents or god-parents, Barth raises the question:

Is there in this matter of faith any substitution, even the strongest, except that of the faith, which Jesus Christ surely guarantees for us and by which He is ours--but by which, however, He has thereby established our own faith?⁹

The absolute possession of faith in accompanying the baptism ritual is the constant insistence Barth makes throughout his entire book.

In contrast to this argument, Cullmann presents a different view. Cullmann agrees with Barth in that faith does play a significant role in the Christian baptism. However, he points out that baptism could be the starting

⁹K. Barth, *The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1948), pp. 45f.

point of faith as well.¹⁰ The relationship between baptism and faith is, according to Cullmann, reciprocal. Namely, faith produces baptism and baptism could produce or lead to faith.

It is also Cullmann's understanding that all the reference to baptism in Acts is mainly of adults because they (the converts) were all from Judaism or heathenism. Three points are quite clear from Cullmann's point of view on baptism:¹¹

1. *After* baptism, faith is demanded of *all* those who are baptized.
2. *Before* baptism, the declaration of faith is a sign of the divine will that baptism take place, demanded from adults who individually came over from Judaism or heathenism; in other cases no mention is made in the New Testament.
3. *During* the baptismal rite, faith is demanded of the praying congregation.

Probably one of the best illustrations Cullmann gives to drive home his point is the comparison he makes of baptism with a natural birth of a child.

For natural birth is a beginning which without any further extension represents a reality in itself, but which, deprived of its continuation, as in the case of an immediately supervening death, loses all further effectiveness despite this reality.¹²

But the strongest argument he presents for the infant baptism is based on the story of the desert fathers

¹⁰Cullmann, p. 52. ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

who were delivered of the Egyptian bondage, but because of their unfaithfulness, they were deprived of their blessing to be in the promised land. (I Cor. 10:1ff) "This prototype of baptism," Cullmann insists, "is mentioned by Paul only to show that in the first act God is active; and in the second, man must respond."¹³

For this reason even if faith was present before baptism the important part is what happens to the baptized after his baptism. Thus baptism points to the *future*, and demands from the future a human response, which will eventually decide where the baptized stands in terms of his faithfulness and obedience as the child of God.

Personally, I see Cullmann's viewpoint on infant baptism as very attractive, but not quite convincing. My own view is that if faith was required prior to one's baptism, although that faith may not carry through the rest of his life as a saint (without blemish), the baptized has that much more chance to endure and maintain that faith which he once cherished and declared in public in the baptismal service. Although baptism is possible without faith, (by going through a motion) that would mean nothing but a ritual; and ritual without the meaning and understanding of that ritual would be useless.

¹³*Ibid.*

CHAPTER IV

BAPTISM AND ETHICS

NEW LIFE STYLE

We have seen that the Christian baptism necessarily demands a new life style different from the old. Such expression by Paul as, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh. . . ." (Rom. 13:14), "Put off the old nature. . .and have put on the new nature. . . ." (Col. 3:9-10) Or, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies. . . ." (Rom. 6:12); "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom. 12:2), all speak toward the same direction as admonitions or exhortations to the new members in the body of Christ. It has frequently been pointed out by various scholars that these "imperatives" follow the Christian "indicatives."

We also learned that the basic significance of baptism is participation in the death and resurrection of Christ. This participation means that the old self dies with Christ, and the new life emerges (Rom. 6:6).

Understanding the theological foundations of Paul's exhortation is, according to Tannehill, a central problem in the interpretation of the Pauline theology.

if Paul's exhortation is cut off from his soteriology, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Paul either reinstated the way of works in order to have an ethical norm, thereby destroying his own theology, or attributed no decisive significance to the Christian's actions, thereby destroying the foundation of his exhortation. However, Paul lays the foundation of his exhortation very carefully in Rom. 6 and 8:1-13, and in Rom. 12:1-2, he begins his exhortation by reminding the reader of this foundation.¹

What we find in Romans 6 makes it clear that Paul understands his exhortation to be directly related to basic soteriological concepts.² If the believer has died with Christ, his old life has come to an end, namely the power of sin and death is no longer operative in him. On the positive side, he has entered into a new life, a new relationship to God is established.

This statement has the connotation in a vertical sense. However, it also brings a horizontal relationship, that is: his new relationship with his fellowmen. For this reason, it is inconceivable for Paul not to think in terms of "love" relationships with fellowmen.³ All acts of the believer must be based on this new foundation which was in Christ, so that the fruits of his life must bear a positive one (Gal. 5:22).

All the distinctions which may have been important

¹R. C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ* (Berlin: Topelmann, 1966), pp. 81-82.

²*Ibid.*

³See section on "Body of Christ," pp. 16-23. For

in the former life in terms of social, cultural and religious life disappear; and the new relationship...that of equality and respect based on *ἀγάπη* (love) should begin. This is indeed the gist of the meaning of the implication of the Christian baptism.

If Christianity as understood by Paul is correct, and I believe it is, all who are baptized in Christ become not only *one* in Christ (I Cor. 12:13); but also they are obligated to help each other as a member of the one big family. It is for this reason that baptism is so essential in understanding Christianity as a whole, for in it we find unity and purpose and direction in our Christian existence.

One cannot over-emphasize the importance of this aspect, for without actual benevolent relation among its members, the life of the Christian will sooner or later fall to the ground.

As Beasley-Murray points out, "this participation in Christ's death and resurrection involves an 'existential' dying to sin and rising up to live in the Koinonia (fellowship) of the Christ by the Holy Spirit."⁴

Paul, man is seen always in his relation to God and his fellowman. Man can never be understood as a self-sufficient, self-contained individual.

⁴G. P. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (London: Macmillian, 1962), p. 287.

Thus in the life of the believer a new life style is inevitable, for the simple reason that baptism signifies the end of the life that cannot please God and the beginning of a life in Him and for His glory.⁵

Another aspect of the newly created Christian's life is characterized by his giving up his boast. Boast is simple another expression of man's hautiness or his independence. By recognizing the act of God as an act of grace through faith, man surrenders his boast. This can only result in a new kind of life, for the believer's previous "walk" was based on his boast. The cross, in other words, excludes man's boast (Rom. 3:27).

Thus in his relation to his fellowman, the end of this boast means "the end of biting and devouring one another and the beginning of a new life characterized by serving one another through love" (Gal. 5:13-15).⁶ Therefore, Paul is able to say "faith working through love" as his great admonition to people in Galatia (Gal. 5:6). "Since you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" (I Cor. 4:7)

It is clear from this then that a Christian must become humble when he recognizes this radical grace of God in Christ. Robert Tannehill succinctly puts it this way:

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁶Tannehill, p. 83.

Since man's boast is surrendered in faith, faith also means the realization in the life of the individual of the death of the old self who was enslaved to the dominion characterized by that boast.⁷

This new relation between the believer and Christ thus takes on a new stand. He is willing and able to endure all the physical and mental hardships in life, even such adverse situations described in I Cor. 4:10-13; II Cor. 6:4-10; and 11:23-27, so that "the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies"(II Cor. 4:10). This ability and willingness to respond even to the adverse situations in life is possible not only because of the gratitude a new man finds in Christ, but also by his understanding of the glory that awaits for him in the eschaton. This is a positive reason for Christians to suffer, for Paul is able to say, "the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." (Rom. 8:18)

In terms of social ethics, Paul does not prescribe specific programs of social reform. The *eschaton* seems too near at hand to attempt any change in slavery (I Cor. 7:20), for example, or to organize some local force to combat Roman imperialism. Yet the basic principle of Paul's ethic demands that just these sorts of things ought to be undertaken. *All* of life comes under the righteous demands

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 125f.

of God, and a gospel which does not speak to man in the social and economic condition of the time is no gospel at all.

As well as presenting his ethic as a response to the gospel, Paul also can describe it as a response to new life within the Christian man which has resulted from his hearing the proclamation with faith. Thus some scholars refer to the "indicative and imperative," of the Pauline ethic as I have earlier pointed out. To state it in short, they hear the apostle command: "Become what you are!" This means that the man of faith ought to be in his life what he has been made to be by the grace of God.⁸ You are dead to sin, so now act like it! You are in Christ, so now live like it, for "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (II Cor. 5:17). "If we live by the Spirit," says Paul, "let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25). This is not at all an unnecessary repetition for admonition but it emphasizes that we have a new life in the spirit of God, and now we *ought* to obey this spirit which is within us.

This new life in Christ is like a yeast in dough. It grows inwardly. The good life a man lives is not purposely displayed because he wants to, but it is seen by others. The Christian is not good because he has to be; rather he is good because he wants to be. Now the whole

⁸See the section on "New Creation," pp. 29-36.

ethic of Paul is simply summed up in one phrase: *Man responds to God's love*. N. Flew of Cambridge once said, "Salvation is all grace; ethics is all gratitude."⁹

We have tried to understand Paul's ethics in relation to baptism. If one seeks to analyze the structure of Paul's ethic in terms of its absolutely fundamental components, then the following formulation can perhaps be defended: "radically conceived, the Pauline ethic is compounded of the apostle's *theological, eschatological, and christological* convictions."¹⁰

These are the three inseparably related root-motifs of his preaching and thus, also, of his ethic. For Paul's ethic has its place only *within* the circumference of his total gospel.

BAPTISM AND ESCHATOLOGY

In Romans 6, we have discussed that when Paul speaks of dying and rising with Christ, and associates it with the end of the old dominion and the foundations of the new, he is thinking of the death and resurrection of Christ as an eschatological event. When a believer in Christ is baptized into His name, he becomes the property of the Lord.

⁹In a lecture delivered at Yale Divinity School.

¹⁰V. P. Furnish, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), p. 213.

His old self, which is marked with sin and death, is now disappeared or abolished as symbolically demonstrated in his baptismal rite. He goes down deep into the water as if to cleanse all his past sins; then rises up as a new being in Christ. All this is possible because of the death and resurrection of Christ which took place on Calvary once and for all, for all mankind. Thus the *newness* of the Christian existence begins (Rom. 6:4). The powers of the old world no longer enslave the Christian (Rom. 6:2ff, 7:1ff and Gal. 2:19), and he is no longer bound by the values and judgments of the old world (Gal. 6:14; II Cor. 5:14ff).

All this is good and exciting for every newly created Christian. But there is a warning: the Christian is not completely immune from the powers of sin and death.

When we examine the passage in Romans 6:5-9, we find that there are two different tenses in each verse: one indicating aorist or past and one future. Verse 5 says, "If we *have been united* with Him in a death like His (a past event), we *shall* certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like his." Again in verse 8, we read, "But if we *have died* with Christ, we believe that we *shall* also live with Him."

It should be pointed out for Paul the past death with Christ is very important because it is the foundation of a new existence, and the present existence of the Christian can only be understood by referring to this

decisive, past event.

This past event which works as a foundation for present existence for man is also a basis for future living. All that happened in Christ for man is not quite complete until the eschaton. We do feel the tension here of a modern man (Christian) who on the one hand is freed from the power of sin and death, yet who, experiences a constant threat of sin and death. Why so?

H. Lietzmann points out that the phrase "we were buried" (v. 4), emphasizes that

the transference of Christ's death is a completed fact in the past, whereas the transference of the resurrection takes place only partially in the present and is completed only in the future.¹¹

This mystic idea undoubtedly originated because of the influence by the Hellenistic culture upon the primitive Christianity. Even Schnackenburg admits that the characteristic elements of mysticism, found in the Hellenistic period, reach into the very earliest beginnings of Christianity.¹²

Having stated thus, what place does eschatology hold for Paul in relation to baptism? Through baptism the believer is risen with Christ sacramentally to a new life

¹¹H. Lietzmann, *An die Römer* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1928), pp. 65-66.

¹²R. Schanckenburg, *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964), p. 197.

(Col. 2:12) and ethically to a new walk of life (Rom. 6:4), but it is not yet the full life of the divine glory.¹³

As Victor Furnish points out it is difficult to separate Paul's eschatology from his soteriology and christology. They are all closely, intimately related to each other. So when one wishes to speak about eschatology, both of these other areas of concern have to come into consideration.¹⁴

Basically, Paul sees the world in two parts: "this age" and "the age to come." The present age is characterized by its transitoriness (I Cor. 7:31), by suffering and tribulation (Rom. 8:18), and by its pervasively evil aspect (Gal. 1:4; Phil. 2:15).¹⁵

In particular the present age is viewed as being held by powers which are alien to God and hostile to His purpose. The hostility of these alien powers is expected not only in their attempt to enslave man to their own purposes (Gal. 4:3), but also in their blinding him to the gospel of Christ and God Himself (II Cor. 4:4), and, ultimately, in their crucifixion of "the Lord of the glory" (I Cor. 2:8).

¹³The word "glory" is a theme of religious hope which is an aspect of the eschatological expectation of both Old and New Testaments (G. V. Rad, "δόξα" in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1971), II, 241).

¹⁴Furnish, pp. 212f. ¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 115f.

Thus, "sin" and "death" are referred to as the agents of this evil power as described in Romans 6. Paul also views that death is the inevitable consequence and punishment of sin (Rom. 6:23).

At the heart of this sin and evil in man is man's own flesh (σάρξ). To Paul, body (σῶμα) is neutral in its effectiveness, but flesh is the seat of all man's evil deeds. In contrast to this ugly side of the power of evil, there is a positive side represented by the "transcendent power" of God. While the powers of the present age seek to annihilate what is and to enthrone death as sovereign, it is God's power which "summons into being things that are not" and "makes the dead to live" (Rom. 4:17).

It is Paul's understanding of the world then that there are these two superpowers raging war against each other. It is Christ who came and destroyed this power of evil once and for all, but not completely, as though the finishing touch will be done when the "last day" comes.

It is this kind of understanding Paul had when he talked about the Christian being freed from sin and death in baptism, but not quite completely out of the influence or the sphere of the evil power (Rom. 6:3-9). Time and again, the expression of aorist mixed with future within the same sentence is a clear indication of this aspect of his understanding. Thus "you have been buried with Christ," but "we too might walk in the newness of life" (Rom. 6:4).

It is apparent then that Paul's use of the motif of dying and rising with Christ is complex, emphasizing in turn the past entry into new life, the present participation in life through death, and the future participation in the life of the resurrection.

Nevertheless, there is a definite unity throughout Paul's argument in presenting Christ-event. The seeming complexity is simply a reflection of the complexity of Paul's own eschatology.¹⁶ One other important fact we ought to keep in mind is that the expectation of the imminent return of Christ dominates the entire character of the composition of Paul's teachings, whether they have to deal with moral, religious or social matters. All his thoughts are turned towards the future. It is for this reason that we have to see all Paul's teachings in light of his eschatology.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 129.

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